

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NON-ALIGNED NEWS POOL: SRI LANKA VIEWS

1. SEMINAR ON "THE NEW INFORMATION ORDER" SPONSORED BY SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE (SLAAS) JULY 27 SHED SOME LIGHT ON CURRENT THINKING ON NA NEWS POOL. CHAIRED BY DR. SUSANTHA GUNATILLEKE, EDITOR PEOPLE'S BANK "ECONOMIC REVIEW", SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED: MERVYN DE SILVA, EDITOR "SUNDAY OBSERVER" AND MEMBER COMMITTEE ON MASS COMMUNICATIONS FACULTY; DR. SUNANDA MAHENDRA DE MEL, CHAIRMAN, MASS COMMUNICATIONS FACULTY; SARATH AMUNUGAMA, SR. ASSISTANT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FORMER DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION.

2. SLAAS SEMINAR STRESSED LINKAGE BETWEEN NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER (NIEO) AND NEW INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION ORDER (NIIO); NEED FOR CORRECTION OF "INFORMATION INBALANCE" TO
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"LIBERATE" NON-ALIGNED NATIONS FROM "CULTURAL

IMPERIALISM." RHETORIC RANGED FROM RADICAL TO MODERATE BUT ALL SPEAKERS WELCOMED PROPOSAL FOR NON-ALIGNED NEWS POOL IN THEORY. SOME SPEAKERS AND QUESTIONERS IN ADUIENCE (WHICH INCLUDED UPI AND NEW YORK TIMES LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS, MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, INFORMATION OFFICIALS AND STUDENTS) EXPRESSED MISGIVINGS ABOUT TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION AND POOL'S PROFESSED "OBJECTIVITY". IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS,ONE OF MOST ARDENT ADVOCATES OF POOL, ADMITED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SERIOUS COMPETITOR OF WESTERN NEWS AGTENCIES DUE LACK OF MONEY, TECHNICAL FACILITIES AND EXPERTISE AND THAT NEWS FROM GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED NON-ALIGNED NATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES MAY WELL BE AS SLANGED AND DISTORTED AS EXISTING SYSTEM.

HE INSISTED HOWEVER THAT POOL COULD SUPPLEMENT NEWS FROM EXISTING SOURCES AND WOULD THEREFORE "BROADEN THE HORIZONS" OF PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. LESS CONVINCED SPEAKERS CAUTIONED AGAINST HASTY IMPLEMENTATION OF POOL BECAUSE OF DANGER OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION MONOPOLY; SUGGESTED THAT NON-ALIGNED FIRST REDRESS DEFICIENCIES AND IMBALANCES OF INFORMATION WITHIN OWN COUNTIRES.

3. IN CONVERSATION EARLIER IN WEEK WITH MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, HE ALSO MADE POINT OF AVOIDING HASTY ACTION BUT BASED ON TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS. PREVAILING MOOD IN OFFICIAL INFORMATION CIRCLES CURRENTLY FAVORS YUGOSLAV DESIRE FOR BELGRADE AS CENTER OF POOL RATHER THAN INDIAN "REGIONAL CENTERS" PLAN. YUGOSLAVS HAVE PROVIDED NEARLY ALL TV AND OTHER MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT FOR NASC AND SRI LANKA BROADCASTING CORP. AS THIS COUNTRY'S "NEWS AGENCY" HAS TWO-WAY TELETYPE LINK WITH "TANJUG" BELGRADE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER. VON GLATZ

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